

EACC NEWS

The East Asia Christian Conference is an organ of continuing fellowship and co-operation among the Churches and Christian Councils in East Asia.

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ECUMENICAL COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE TAIWAN JOINS EACC

EACC - The Ecumenical Cooperative Committee of the Republic of China formally requested membership in the East Asia Christian Conference and was voted a regular member at the recent meeting of the Continuation Committee held in Singapore.

Organized in January 1969, the Committee was set up by the Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Mennonite and Roman Catholic churches; the YMCA and the YWCA; and the Bible Society.

The Committee set forth its purpose to strengthen inter-denominational relationships by seeking to realise "our oneness in Christ and our ministry for Him" and to encourage action that will promote the church's mission in the Republic of China and the world. They wish to maintain fellowship with and establish membership in other ecumenical bodies.

Already efforts of cooperation in projects of mutual concern have resulted in the raising of funds to be sent to East Pakistan and Asian Christian Service of the EACC.

BREAD FOR THE WORLD EXECUTIVE TOURS ASIA

BANGKOK - Dr. Wolfgang Schmidt, responsible for the Asia desk of "Bread for the World" in Stuttgart, Germany, is visiting Asia from September 11 to October 12, covering Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia.

Following World War II, the blessings of Christian love shown by member churches of the World Council of Churches was felt and experienced by the German Christians as a sign of the reconciling mercy of God. Countless shipments of food, clothing and medical supplies were vital expressions of this love.

"The experience of being among the receiving churches taught the Germans that even the 'distant neighbour' can become a brother," according to a statement of the organization. In 1959 the churches in Germany were able to move from the ranks of the 'receiving' to the ranks of the 'giving' churches. Bread for the World Campaign was primarily moved by gratitude for the unconditional help they had received from the Christian world. The German churches now feel that it is their turn to help the 'distant neighbours' in their manifold needs.

From 1959-1969, over 247 million Deutsch marks had been raised to assist some 343 projects in Asia, 347 projects in Africa, 131 projects in America and some 45 elsewhere. Relief, vocational training and agricultural improvement secure high priority in the contribution of these funds under agreed procedures. Donations of the Churches in German Democratic Republic are allocated in conjunction with the Red Cross.

"Bread for the World" is a campaign service association of Protestant churches in Germany working through the Ecumenical Department of "Diaknosiches Werk".

Dr. Schmidt's visit to Asia is to see programmes and projects the funds are assisting and to find out where and how additional assistance can be given. The Rev. Jorge Quismundo, Director of Asian Christian Service of Laos, accompanied him to the new out-patient clinic at Paksong near Savannakhet, Laos, where he saw the work of ACS volunteers.

UN TO VOTE ON CHINA

EACC - The possibility of the People's Republic of China being admitted to the United Nations and thus entering into the family of nations presents a new climate in international relations with deep significance for Asia.

Two alternatives are to be voted on in the present UN General Assembly in New York. A proposal from Albania, backed by 20 co-sponsors, calls for the replacement of the Republic of China by the People's Republic in the UN and all agencies. Two proposals by the United States of America with 17 co-sponsors are presented. One proposes that the People's Republic of China be admitted to the UN and also that the Republic of China retain its seat in both the Security Council and the Assembly. The other calls for a two thirds vote of the Assembly if the Republic of China is to be expelled from the UN.

Although the Security Council had voted that the Albanian resolution be considered first, the Assembly voted by 65 to 47 with 15 abstentions to include the United States' proposals in the Assembly's agenda. The debate is expected to be held in October.

The prominence of this decision which gives this session of the UN the possibility of being the most momentous in the UN's 26-year history, has been overshadowed by the occurrence of mysterious happenings within China, notably the cancellation of the traditional October 1 National Day Parade. Speculations made seemed to be weighted toward some kind of internal conflict--'that grave internal political developments were shaking China'--according to an Associated Press report on Saturday, September 25.

Reports seem to indicate that prospects for the entry of the People's Republic of China into the official family of nations would be a welcome event. Reportedly Southeast Asian leaders seem to perceive the beginning of new political alignments. Speaking about President Nixon's impending visit to China, one of the aides of Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak said: "The old signposts are gone. We're on a completely new road. Most nations now believe that they can maintain their own identities and powers instead of being forced to choose one of the two sides."

WCC ASSEMBLY TO BE IN INDONESIA 1975

GENEVA - The venue for the next World Council Assembly is set for Indonesia in 1975 according to an action taken by the Executive Committee of the WCC held in Sofia, Bulgaria, September 5-9. Dr. T. B. Simatupang, Chairman of the National Council of Churches in Indonesia, conveyed the invitation.

Actions on human rights, global environment, dialogue with men of living faiths and ideologies and studies on Baptism and the Eucharist were taken by the Executive Committee.

The Committee allocated US\$200,000 to twenty-four organizations to combat racism. The basic concept of the special fund is to assist in the process by which the racially oppressed and powerless people of the world are enabled to become powerful, to be self-reliant, and to determine for themselves the political and social system under which they want to live. It set December 19, 1973--the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights--as the goal for ratification by the countries around the world of an International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights and one on Civil and Political rights. The Covenant on Human Rights has been ratified by only nine member states of the UN, none of which is a major nation and therefore cannot be put into force.

The Executive Committee of the WCC authorized a panel of experts to help keep the churches informed on current environment questions. This arose out of

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the view that growing pollution severely threatens the earth's limited resources and deserves the attention of the world's Christians. A booklet dealing with this subject called "Global Environment, Responsible Choice and Social Justice" is being prepared which draws on the contributions of natural and social scientists and theologians.

The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism has set their Assembly for December 1972 around the theme "Salvation Today". The Assembly will give careful attention to the way in which Christians in different cultural and social situations understand the term "salvation".

Staff appointments by the Executive Committee include the following Asians: Mr. Soon Young Hahn, Anglican, Korea, as Secretary for Asian refugees and Assistant Secretary for emergencies for CICARWS; Dr. Shoki Coe, Presbyterian, Taiwan, as Director and Dr. Ivy Chou, Methodist, Malaysia, as staff member of the Theological Education Fund; and Mrs. Tomoko Evdokimoff, Orthodox, Japan, as Secretary for translation. Dr. Ralph Mould, former General Secretary of the World Conference on Christian Education now merged with the WCC, becomes the Secretary in Education responsible for Education Renewal Fund.

INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE EMPHASIZED

EACC - Dialogue between peoples of different faiths was an emphasis of both the Continuation Committee meeting of the EACC in Singapore in late August and the Executive Committee meeting of the WCC held in September.

At the latter meeting Dr. Philip Potter, Director of the CWME, reported that a number of conferences and publications are planned by member churches on Inter-Faith Dialogue. The members of the Executive Committee underlined the importance of involving people from areas where such dialogue is a daily and inevitable reality. They also stressed the relation between dialogues with other faiths and with ideologies, "since the renaissance of great religions is directly influenced by the encounter between traditional faith and emerging ideologies."

On the other hand, the EACC Continuation Committee voiced a word of caution with regard to suggestions which had come out in the "Aide Memoire" which came out of the Study Centre Directors' Consultation held in Hong Kong last May. The Aide Memoire had recommended the "possibilities for sharing in the worship and spirituality" of other religions.

The EACC statement pointed out that Christian communities in Asia are often recent converts to the faith. There are many among them who react violently to the memories and symbolism in the faiths they have left behind. The good news of Jesus Christ meant liberation from the bondage of their ancestral faiths. They are as yet neither emotionally ready or theologically exercised for certain radical insights of a "dialogue theology", the statement said. "To many they (such practices) will appear as a betrayal and a compromise. True openness can only come out of a total commitment to Christ and his demands."

The Committee urged "our member churches, in the spirit of the statements which have been issued to study the Aide Memoire and explore the implications." They recalled the EACC statement on Inter-Faith Dialogue in July 1970 at Atami, Japan. It had stated: "The situation of the 1970's in relation to inter-faith and inter-human dialogue confronts us Christians with many fundamentals which go to the very roots of our response to God in Christ and how we are to understand biblically, God's purpose of love for the world and the mission of the Church. It is our opinion that our varied church bodies need seriously to struggle with these problems, before our fellow Christians are engulfed in a dialogue for which they are not prepared intellectually or spiritually."

NEPAL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

KATHMUNDU - The Nepal Christian Fellowship, a loosely-knit fellowship of some thirty congregations that comprise the Christian Church in Nepal, is meeting this week, September 27-October 3 in Pokhara for their annual time of prayer, Bible study, preaching and the transaction of necessary business according to a report from the Rev. Frank E. Wilcox, recently appointed Executive Secretary for the United Mission to Nepal (UMN).

The famous Shanta Bahwan Hospital of the United Mission to Nepal which has been threatened with severe financial problems received a clear mandate from His Majesty's Government. The communication said: "We want, we need Shanta Bhawan and its excellent ministry of medicine in its present location for several years to come. If the Mission cannot continue the hospital, we will certainly try to carry it on." Mr. Wilcox disclosed that finances are urgent for operating expenses, a new building and for additional staff.

The Mission is in discussion with the National Department of Health Services for a cooperative venture in a new hospital in Bhaktapur and for several smaller hospitals in the hills.

In accordance with the purposes of the UMN the Amp Pipal Agricultural Project in the Gorkha District was transferred to a government agriculturalist in a public ceremony in August. There are plans to develop other agricultural and village development projects in the western end of Kathmundo Valley. UMN has seconded workers to government institutions and projects including work among Tibetan refugees and a boys boarding school.

In response to a request from the United Mission to Nepal for membership and fellowship with the East Asia Christian Conference, the Continuation Committee at Singapore asked the General Secretary to follow-up the negotiations for furthering relationships.

BRIEFS . . .

. Dr. Patrocinio S. Ocampo, Manila, was named to the first Presidium of the World Methodist Council installed in Denver, Colorado, end of August. Bishop Yap Kim Hao, Singapore, was elected one of the two Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee. Mrs. Myrtle Gunasekera, Ceylon, was chosen to be the Area President for West Asia and a member of the Executive Committee of the World Federation of Methodist Women.

. Archbishop Gabriel Thohey recently became the first Burmese Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church in his country. He succeeds Archbishop Bazin who left Rangoon for Paris in August. Speaking of a farewell dinner given the outgoing Archbishop, a correspondent wrote: "The fellowship was up-lifting and the deliberations were both challenging towards Christian unity and revealing of God's love and hope."

. The India Parliament has rejected a bill which would have made conversion to Christianity nearly impossible in India. The legislation, termed Prevention of Conversion Bill, was rejected by the Lok Sabha, Parliament's lower house, after Jagannath Rao Joshi, leader of the anti-missionary Jan Sangh party, accused the government of delegating its responsibility for education to the West and western missionaries.

. Miss Pamela Gruber, staff member of the World Council of Churches, has been appointed national leader training Director for the 12-month campaign of the Action for World Development of Australia. Mr. Vaughn Hinton is the Director of the campaign. A member of the Youth Department of the WCC, Miss Gruber has been working with SODEPAX (the Joint WCC-Vatican Committee on Society, Development and Peace).